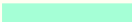




UN-DOING EU TRADE AGREEMENTS TO RE-BUILD A FAIRER PUZZLE

Lessons learned from international
Youth dialogues with the Global South



We want to underline that the shared opinions were those of the speakers and this document is based on the inputs of the speakers and the assessment of the Young Fair Trade Advocates about the topics.

The Fair Trade Advocacy Office supports the work of the Young Fair Trade Advocates. The paper presented by our group of young people is solely their work and reflects their own views and opinions. It does not necessarily represent the views, opinions, or official stance of our organization.

May, 2023

Design: Both Nomads

Pictures: Midia Ninja, YFTA, Sebastian Barros, UNSPLASH



OUR FUTURE, OUR VOICE

We are the Young Fair Trade Advocates (YFTAs) and we are calling for a global, fair and ecological transition. We are a diverse group of young individuals with ambitions and goals for our future. However, alarm bells are ringing in our heads as we see a desperate need to reform the current socio-economic system that is endangering the lives of billions of people.

We all share the common goal of reversing some of the environmental (and social) damage caused by previous generations. We want to live in a world that is not solely driven by profit, but one that respects diversity and marginalised people and that fully comprehends the impending climate “disaster”.



We recognise that we are privileged to be able to gather together and directly communicate with you (policymakers), who have a mandate to serve the public interest. The decisions you make ultimately have an impact on millions of lives.

For us, the voices of those impacted by trade agreements, the voices of our partners in third countries, are not heard loud enough on the EU decision-making table.

That is why – believing in your ability to listen and in ours to speak – **we want to amplify the voices of farmers, garment workers, women, friends, indigenous leaders and many more in EU partner countries, whose lives are strongly shaped by EU trade agreements and depend on us providing equal opportunities.**

We hope that our voices can be heard and, in turn, the voices of our speakers from the Global South. We are doing this in the hopes that together, we can create a trading system that benefits all and leaves no one behind.



Acknowledgements

We, the Young Fair Trade Advocates, **want to recognise our partners in the Global South, whose voices and experiences have been the driving force behind our advocacy work. Their courage and commitment to fighting for a more just and sustainable world have been a constant source of inspiration to us.**

We are also very grateful for the guidance we have received from the Fair Trade Advocacy Office and the collaboration we have been able to establish together.

We also would like to acknowledge the policymakers and decision-makers who have listened to our concerns and engaged with us. We are grateful for their openness and willingness to hear the voices of young people and to consider our policy recommendations.

We hope this valuable document will receive the consideration it deserves.



List of speakers



Ana Romero Cano

Member of Peru's Domestic Advisory Group



Jorge Acosta

Union leader Trade Union of Agricultural Workers and Farmers (ASTAC) and human rights defender from Ecuador



Helen Rojas

Cedetrabajo, member of Colombia's Domestic Advisory Group



Marike De Peña

Director and co-founder of the cooperative Banelino, Dominican Republic

List of speakers



Brendah Akankunda

Program officer in charge of investment for sustainable development at SEATINI, Uganda



Professor Muhammad Azizul Isla

Professor in Sustainability Accounting & Transparency, University of Aberdeen Business School (UK), Bangladesh



Carolina Pavese

PhD in international Relations from LSE,
Assistant Professor at ESPM, Brazil



Deborah Osei-Mensah

Operations Manager at Asunafo Cocoa Farmers, Ghana

List of speakers



Nicki Becker

Climate activist and co-founder of Jóvenes por el Clima, part of Fridays for Future movement, Argentina



Luis Jimenez Caceres

Spokesperson Atacama Indigenous People, Chile



Mike Anane

Journalist focusing on electronic waste, Ghana



Carolina de Moura

Human Rights and Environmental Defender, Brazil

Executive summary

What is not working with trade agreements?

There are, undoubtedly, various positive impacts that derive from trade agreements, such as increased exports and foreign investment, which can boost economic growth and create new jobs. Trade agreements can provide new opportunities for companies to access foreign markets, which can lead to increased sales and revenue.

However, important negative impacts also derive from trade agreements:

Foreign investment in natural resources can lead to overexploitation, environmental harm, and social conflict. For example, cases of wind energy companies at risk of contributing to human rights abuses through their mineral supply chain¹, should no longer exist. The green transition must be carried out with the utmost respect and can serve as an opportunity to produce energy in such a way that both environmental rights and Human Rights- including labour rights- are respected in the process.

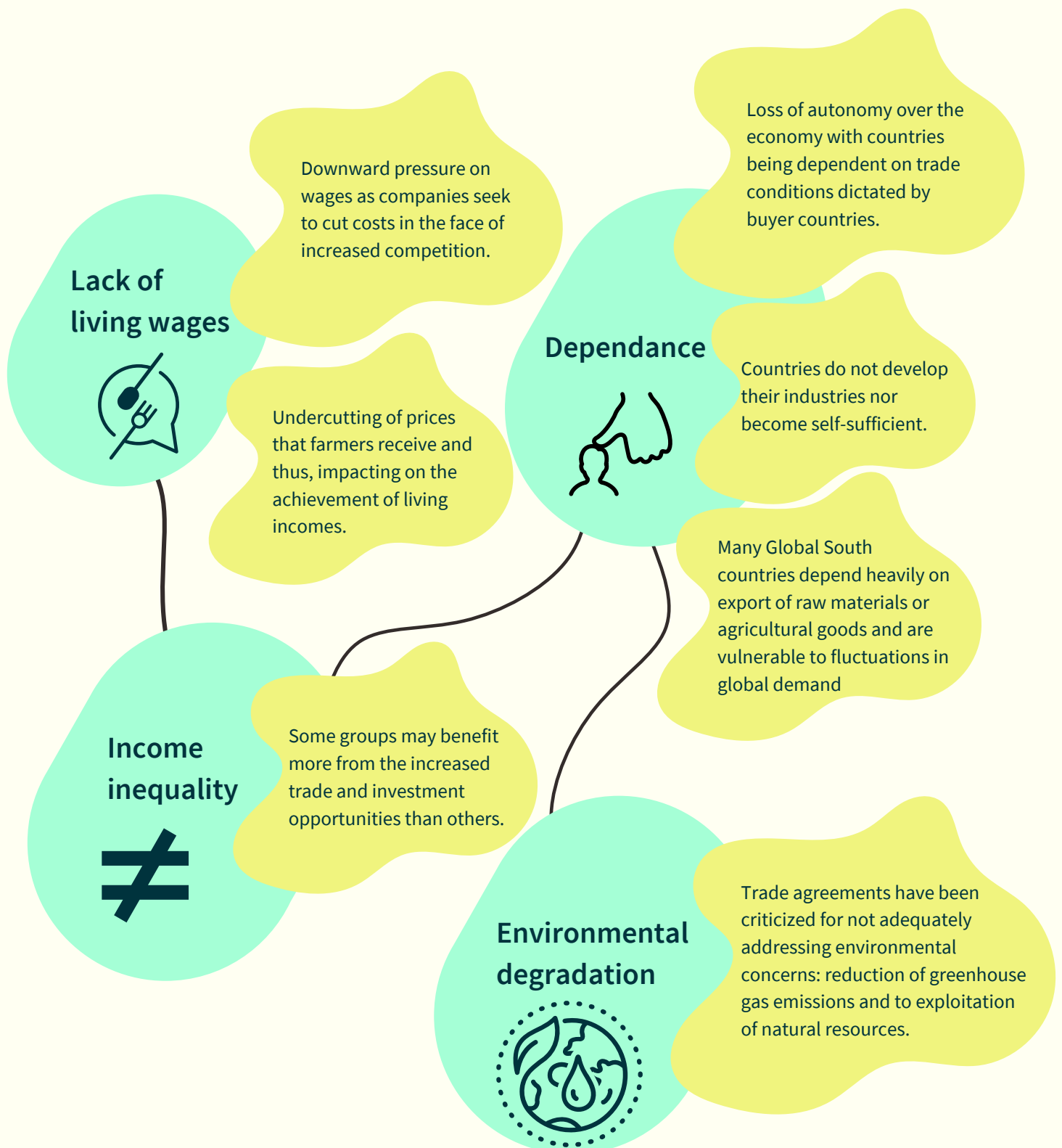
Despite this, States often do not make use of their regulatory powers to promote and safeguard human and environmental rights, and to meaningfully involve local communities into decisions regarding their territory. Instead, States play an ambivalent role, prioritizing facilitating foreign investment and addressing local demands only when there are unacceptable levels of resistance.

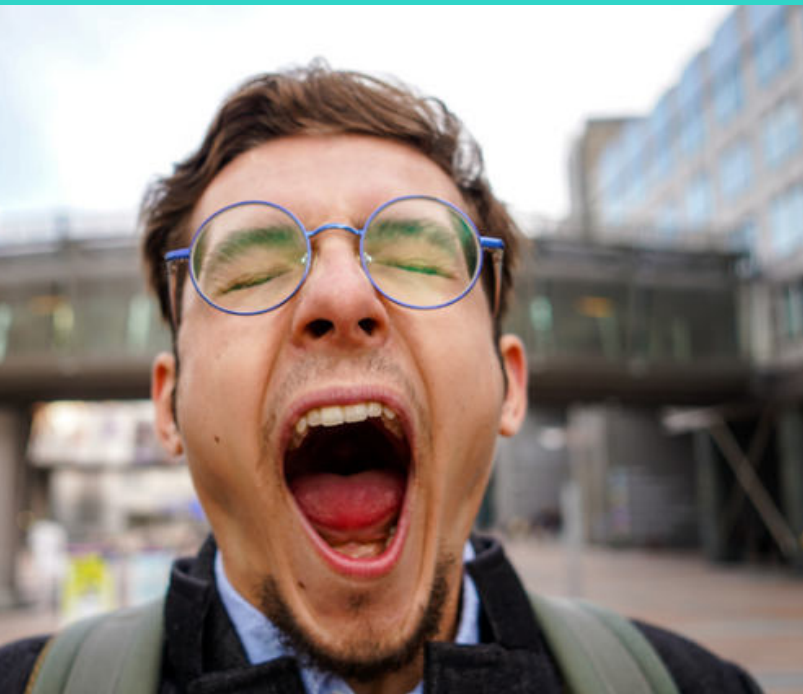
States often do not make use of their regulatory powers to promote and safeguard human and environmental rights



The un-promoted impacts of trade agreements

This generates situations in which the following negative impacts of trade agreements manifest themselves.





**WE ARE GROWING
TIRED OF THE SAME
NARRATIVE AND THE
LACK OF ACTUAL
CHANGE...**





**LISTEN TO OUR
VOICES AND ACT
ON OUR WORDS.**



Un-doing trade agreements

Lessons learned from the ground

Following an insightful and heart-to-heart discussion with 12 speakers on the ground, from 10 different countries, we hereby present a series of arguments for why the current trade model used in the EU's trade agreements is **UNFAIR, UNSUSTAINABLE**, and responsible for generating negative impacts, particularly for partner countries.

Here into a display of the most salient issues as brought up by our Global South representatives:

The (negative) trade balance in partners countries

The Free Trade Agreements (FTA) between the EU and Colombia, Peru and Ecuador were based on the recognition of the need to support sustainable development and economic diversification of partners.² However, benefits from the FTA have not been equally distributed between the different trading parties.

Is the current trade agreement model effective? Is it generating a positive impact in partner countries?



According to Helen Rojas (Colombia), the FTA has had different effects in the country: where requirements put in place have favoured EU member states rather than their territory.

As added by Helen, exports have fallen and there has been no strengthening of the productive sector. It is reported that since 2013, when the agreement came into force, the trade balance had been in deficit for Colombia. The EU's total imports from Colombia have led to a persistent trade deficit. These thoughts were supported by Jorge Acosta (Ecuador), who also explained that although the FTA contained different obligations for all parties, there has not been enough monitoring of compliance to those obligations, which has limited the country's ability to benefit from the trade agreement.

Imbalances of power in global trade

For Brendah Akankunda (Uganda), the root cause of the imbalances of power in global trade are found in unfair trade agreements: **“Africa suffers a challenge of trade injustice, policies are being set by the big corporations and communities are not receiving a fair share from the goods produced”**. Prices are being set by the middlemen and local communities are not receiving any of the benefits from this trade, says Marike de Pena (Dominican Republic). As Brendah said, Africa is still facing trade injustice. Policies are determined by big corporations. There is no negotiation space for smallholders and rules do not work in pro of livelihoods in Africa.

This is also happening in many other Global South regions. EU trade agreements are in favour of big EU companies. Moreover, the agreements increase dependence on multinational corporations, which pose a threat to local and regional value chains.⁴ According to Marike (Dominican Republic), producers [in the Global South] suffer a lot from unfair trading practices, and they are often forced (by companies) to sell below the cost of what would be a sustainable production.⁵

For example, coffee is sold at half its production cost and farmers in Latin America and Caribbean are not price setters but price takers, so farmers take what is offered and cannot set the price. According to a report by the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (2021), the average coffee income (not household income) was at or below the poverty line.⁶

This is also reflected in the banana supply chain, where, for instance, the average monthly wage of workers in the banana sector in Costa Rica is as low as \$US 604.0,⁷ but the minimum living wage for rural areas in the country is estimated at \$US753 per Month.⁸

“EU agreements only confirm exploitative nature. It is all about extraction of raw materials. Producers cannot add value”



Professor Muhammad Azizul Islam (born in Bangladesh) shares their research findings that unfair practices are widely spread in fashion retailers sourcing products from Bangladesh, where an estimate of 50% of suppliers suffer from unfair trading practices and which has a devastating impact on workers.

Under such circumstances, especially due to a lack of access to financing and other resources, such as technology and training, farmers and producers' overall capacity to adopt more sustainable production practices is further hampered.

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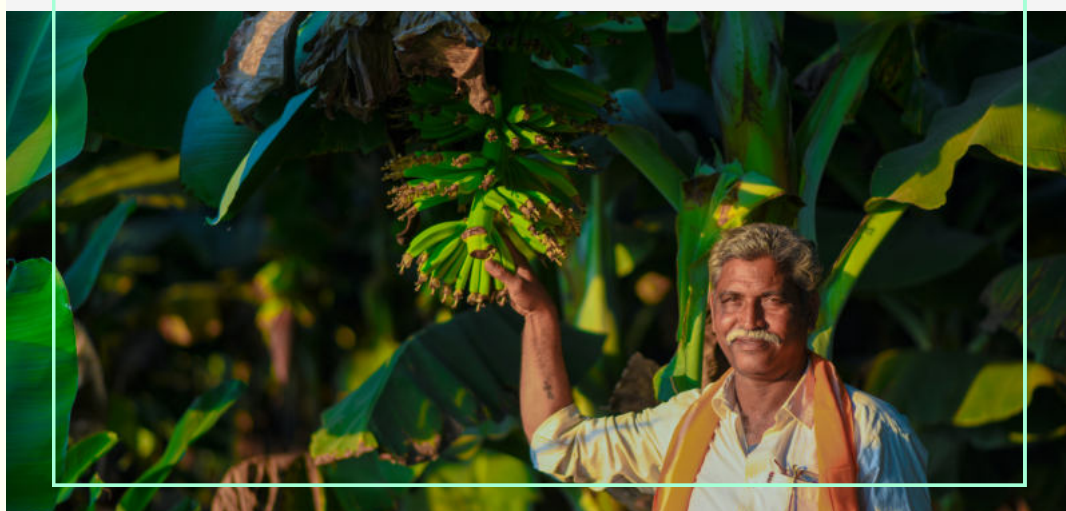
This happens mostly because farmers in the Global South are structurally forced to be price takers, which means they are often forced accept the prices settled by the market for their goods. The current trade agreement model only exacerbates this.

Luis Jimenez (Chile) explained that the political classes (in Latin America) have this narrative of 'grow, grow, and keep growing', where environmental and social impacts are seen as collateral damage in this process of growth. Even though national governments and local authorities have an obligation to protect their citizens, Mike Anane (Ghana) explained that the power of companies (mining lobby) is so huge that it tends to override that of governments and local institutions.

"Africa is still facing trade injustice"



"Banana, coffee and cocoa farmers are not receiving a fair prices they still live below the poverty line. If this price is not achieved, there is a negative impact of trade".



Impact for smallholder farmers, producers and workers

In Africa, trade agreements can often be detrimental to local farmers and food producers. Due to lopsided EU trade agreements, African countries are flooded with cheap, subsidised goods while being unable to export much in return.¹⁰ Brendah (Uganda) affirmed that Africa is a “dumping centre” where EU products come at a cheap cost, which ultimately affects local production.

“Is there a fair share from cooperation coming to the country? Do they give people a fair share of profits?”



Despite recent efforts to include chapters on sustainability and participation of affected peoples in trade agreements, they have, so far, largely failed to involve communities in a dignified and tangible way. As Luis (Chile) explains, countries in Latin America, have submitted to an economic model that liberalises the flow of foreign capital and where foreign investments are protected, at the expense of the environmental and human rights of the population living near the extraction areas. Due to power imbalances, Luis pointed out that attempts to integrate these people into how their land is used have largely failed.

There were measures in Chile to include indigenous peoples on corporate boards. However, this is problematic in places such as the Global South because indigenous communities cannot engage in a symmetrical dialogue with corporate executives. According to Luis, companies will frequently try to form a “relationship with the community” but they will not allow the community to participate in decision-making on the use of their lands; instead, they will be given crumbs.



The power of big enterprises has influenced the way FTAs are developed, affecting the internal markets, workers, and small producers. Jorge (Ecuador) expressed their concerns on the disappearance of smallholder farmers and producers due to their impossibility to trade directly, especially in the banana sector.

Because FTAs may increase competitive pressures on producer countries, Jorge also mentioned the environmental consequences of agriculture as a result of the excessive use of pesticides to increase production of food and keep up with demand and global competition. This reality has been reported, demonstrating that intensification of agricultural production as an outcome of trade expansion has a massive impact on the environment. Increased pollution, degrading natural resources, deforestation, soil degradation, and/or displacement of local farmers are all contributing factors. Studies also report that this issue may be a result of FTAs supporting trade facilitation over environmental protection.¹¹

Brumadinho dam disaster

The story of Carolina de Moura is quite eye opening. Carolina lives in a mining region in Brazil:

“I live in Brumadinho in Mina Gerais, where there was a tragedy in 2019 with an explosion of a dam of mining residues of the Vali dam, an iron mine. This tragedy killed 272 people in minutes...”.

According to Carolina, current trade treaties are not designed to overcome inequalities, end slave labour, to decrease contamination of agro-toxins, or to stop extractivism, that also brings water insecurity. Extractive mining has a direct link with the maintenance of water sources, so unfortunately these trade agreements are not designed to overcome these problems, but the opposite.

“I don’t know what else needs to happen, what more damage needs to happen so that a profound and definitive solutions is taken as to change our ways of living”



In Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, politically powerful agricultural companies, which benefit from trade agreements with the EU, take over lands inhabited by Indigenous people, who are then forced to relocate. Similarly, Luis (Chile) indicated that the depopulation of territories, is a big problem in the North of the country, which happens because of mining and its negative environmental impact.

Impact for Indigenous communities

Both Luis and Carolina de Moura (Brazil) shared that this has direct impact on the rights of Indigenous communities: these are communities that have a special nexus with their territories and whose existence is connected to nature.

What increases the impact further, in Chile, is that there is a lack of participation from local communities and even less of Indigenous ones. They do not have a seat at the negotiation table of agreements, they do not have representation in Parliament and ultimately changes in laws are also made without listening to them.

“As pessoas aqui têm uma perspectiva de que a mineração não pode continuar dessa forma e de que a transição energética não significa mineração sustentável. Toda mineração é insustentável. As pessoas precisam encontrar outra maneira de fazer sua transição energética. Modelos extrativistas não funcionam”.



As put by Mike (Ghana), the impact of mining and mining waste manifests itself in pollution. Increased trade and increased exports have resulted in increased pollution as gold extraction has increased. This results in the loss of water bodies, access to farmland, and all the associated risks.

The Right to a healthy environment?



Studies affirm that ambient concentrations of pollution deriving from mining and e-waste represent an environmental stressor that could alter autonomic balance, and subsequent increased risk for cardiovascular diseases including ischemia, arrhythmias, or myocardial infarctions.¹² Even the UN Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, has highlighted the concerns around the situation in Ghana.¹³

Mike elaborates that water bodies, rivers and trees in the mining communities are polluted with toxic waste, from the mining processes. **Cyanide and mercury get into the water bodies, which are the sources of drinking water for these community members.** Gold mining activities also occur in protected areas, causing the destruction of large swathes of forest reserves and all the environmental harm that comes with it. For many, **the interests have been the profits and the gold that leaves Ghana to go to the EU.**

Connected to the case in Ghana, Jorge Acosta (Ecuador) indicated that the use of pesticides is having tremendous negative consequences for both the health of workers and their environment. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes referred to¹⁴, the use of certain pesticides can lead to chronic kidney disease cases and water shortages but there is also documented impacts on reproductive and intergenerational health, including birth defects, leukaemia and other childhood cancers.

“Sustainability chapters in trade agreements are merely an accessory or little decoration to seem like they’re caring”

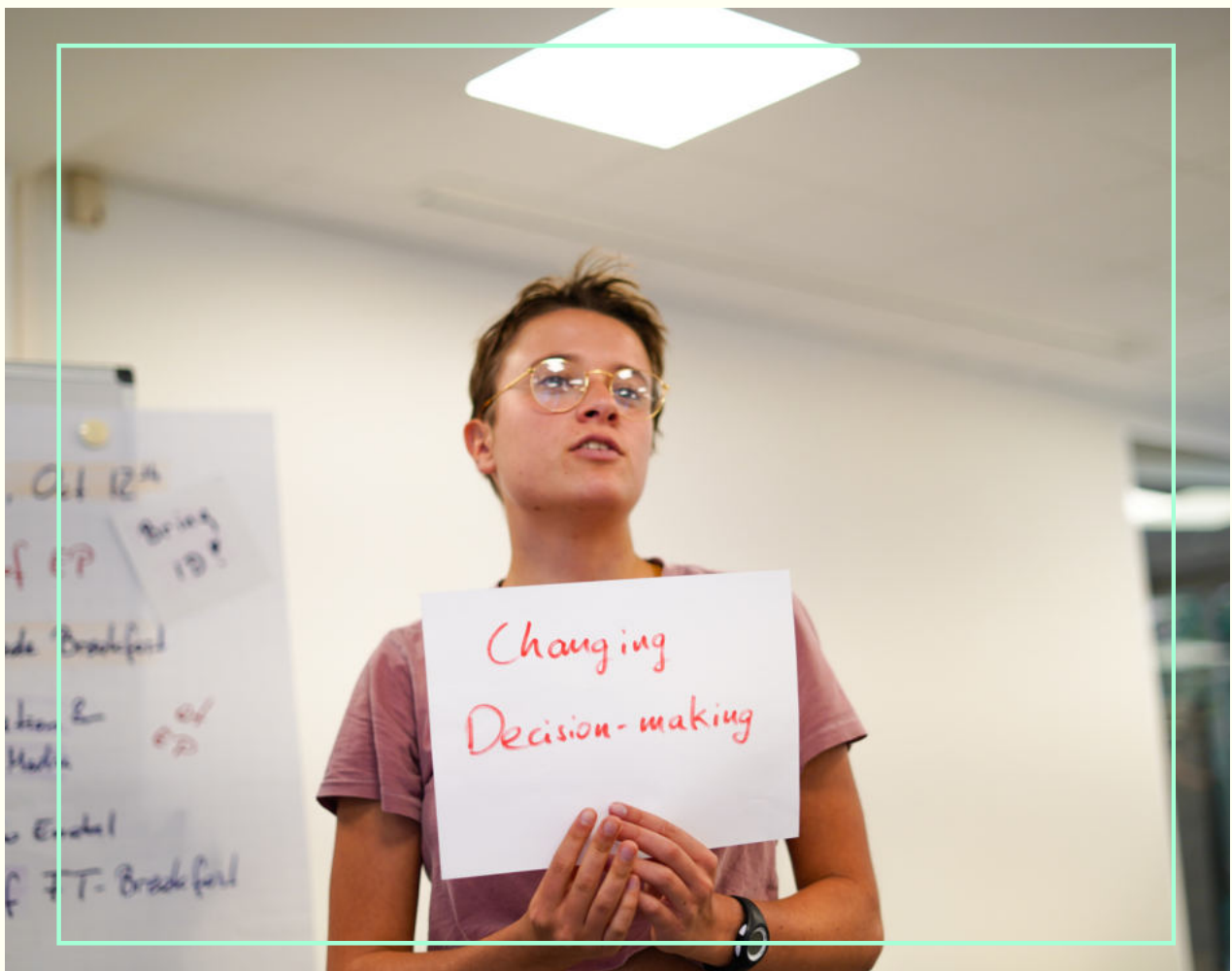


Generally, the health or environmental risks associated with these substances are dramatic: death from inhalation, birth defects, reproductive or hormonal disorders, or cancer. These substances will also contaminate drinking water sources and poison ecosystems.¹⁵

Carolina de Moura (Brazil) commented on the role that trade agreements play in this situation by indicating that sustainability chapters in trade agreements are a mere accessory. But Carolina added: “if you look closely, there will be no sanction if companies violate rights, if they contaminate the territories”. In many cases, this is a way of simply legitimising a decision without really listening to what the affected people are proposing; and the responsible States and companies remain immune.¹⁶

In Chile, a similar viewpoint exists: Luis believes that environmental protection chapters can be introduced/ included in the agreement, but when these laws are to be implemented in the countries, everyone ignores them.

Furthermore, Brendah (Uganda) affirmed that even when they speak of climate justice, governments are involved in signing agreements that are detrimental to the environment, such as the Energy Charter. So “if we continue to negotiate bad agreements, the negative impact remains on communities”.



Promotion of labour, human and environmental rights

According to the study on limits of the European Union's Trade and Sustainable Development Chapters (TSD), there is **no evidence that the existence of TSD has led to improvements in labour standards governance**.¹⁷

The speakers from Colombia, Peru and Ecuador believe that FTAs will not have a significant impact on growing respect and protection for core labour and human rights standards such as Living Wages, safety and health standards, trade union freedom, access to social security, gender equality, and the prohibition of child labour and modern slavery.

In this respect, Helen (Colombia) revealed that trade agreements were expected to secure employment, but this has not occurred. For Helen, the experience with trade agreements has been negative. **Overall, and based on the speakers' experiences, trade agreements have been a disappointment, failing to match expectations in terms of labour, human, and environmental rights.**

The EU should promote human rights in all its relations with other countries around the world, including when setting trade-related objectives.¹⁸ However, **according to the speakers, FTAs have not contributed to ensure respect for workers in their territories.** This is also reflected in reports which mention that, even though Andean partner governments have taken some measures to improve working conditions and labour rights, supported by EU-funded projects, there are still problems with labour inspections, trade union activity and labour regulations, particularly in the agricultural sector.¹⁹ There are limitations in labour provisions as FTAs are driven primarily by business interests where labour issues are not set as priority during negotiation agreements and are not given the same weight as commercial issues.

“Todas las promesas respecto al acuerdo comercial, en términos económicos-comerciales, no han servido. La balanza comercial es cada vez mas negativa”.



Ana Romero (Peru) mentioned that FTAs have not contributed to ensuring the promotion of trade that guarantees work for all and respect for core labour standards, such as Living Wages, safety and health standards, trade union freedom, access to social security, the prohibition of child labour, modern slavery, and labour discrimination, among others. According to reports, labour rights groups in Colombia and Peru rejected the FTA because it did not safeguard or encourage initiatives addressing these concerns. Moreover, **FTAs are seen as a step back in terms of protecting rights and promoting EU values.**²⁰

The same situation of poor (or non-existent) human rights promotion can be witnessed in the garment sector, as Professor Islam (Bangladesh) noted. Forced labour is the biggest challenge in the garment sector and while there has been some progress since the Rana Plaza tragedy, there has been none on forced labour.

Presence of forced labour



There is no mechanism to hold retailers accountable for their purchasing practices, which leads to forced labour. According to a report by the Fair Wear Foundation, workers in the Bangladeshi garment industry often lack access to information about their rights, as well as the ability to organise and collectively bargain.²¹ In many cases, suppliers prioritise profit over the well-being of their employees, leading to a cycle of abuse and exploitation.²²

On the other side of the world, Jorge (Ecuador) mentioned that workers have continued to experience modern slavery conditions after the FTA entered into force. According to Helen (Colombia), companies seek to hire cheaper labour to suit local and global demands, which has led to a degradation of working conditions. According to ILO, employment in Latin America has returned to pre-pandemic levels, but the labour landscape is marked by increased informality and working poverty, with one out of two workers being affected by informal employment.²³ Therefore, many workers face challenges such as low income, no access to social protection and job instability.



Impact on gender inequalities

The speakers from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru affirmed that gender inequalities continue to affect their societies. Carolina Pavese (Brazil) highlighted that the pressure for commodities has increased since the foundation of Mercosur in 1991. Consequently, women have been pushed away from the agricultural sector. In the case of Brazil, the excess of agricultural production has been followed by the establishment of industrial agribusiness, which are large export-led producers. Those companies have driven small producers out of the market, especially women who have worked with and for SMEs. As a result, many women have lost their land, their source of income and those women have not been absorbed by agribusiness, leaving them with food security and income issues.

The implementation of FTAs has had little impact on the gender and the improvement of living conditions for women has been limited. One of the issues is the lack of a gender lens to help address gender inequalities in FTAs, such as providing State support to women in the domestic and care work and promoting their open access to decent jobs.

Gender blind agreements



“Wherever you go, inequality presents itself in the same way, it may change the degrees of the inequality, but it is always there. There is a global agenda of inequality”.



As stated by Carolina Pavese (Brazil), women are not a homogenous concept. Women are a very diverse group, with different backgrounds, identities, cultures, religious beliefs, and social and economic conditions that influence how women interact with the world and their surroundings, as well as how trade agreements affect them. Because they are a heterogeneous group, policies that take this diversity into account are essential.

Carolina (Brazil) then added that a gender chapter in trade agreements is vital to bringing visibility to inequalities and to the risk that a particular agreement holds in stressing and enhancing inequalities. However, a true assessment of gender inequalities is needed rather than a general perspective.

For Deborah Osei-Mensah (Ghana) regulation on human rights (such as mHREDD) can help women be less exploited. However, if Living Income is not a topical subject in HREDD, smallholder farmers will not be able to earn an income to support a decent livelihood.

The UN is clear about the impact of climate change on gender inequality: “The climate crisis is not gender neutral. Women and girls experience the greatest impacts of climate change, which amplifies existing gender inequalities and poses unique threats to their livelihoods, health, and safety.”²⁴

Gender and climate change



This resonates with the words of Nicki Becker (Argentina), who highlighted how the climate crisis is already affecting women more than men in Argentina. Women, for example, are more affected by poverty in Buenos Aires because they have fewer access to opportunities. Providing women with entrepreneurship skills, jobs and educational programs can lead to significant progress. For instance, there is huge potential in plastic recycling and the solar industry to incorporate this gender approach, especially in the context of the green transition.²⁵



The role of civil society

According to Brendah (Uganda) local communities should have a greater voice in the decision-making process, as well as a bigger share of the benefits derived from international trade. Civil society from the Global South must have a say at negotiation tables and there is a need to review investment policies which do not even mention the protection of workers' rights, of communities and the environment.

On the controversial EU-Mercosur agreement, Carolina de Moura (Brazil) commented that the agreement is a continuation of the EU's centuries of colonial exploitation of the Global South. Carolina shared that many organizations are banding together to oppose the agreement, with the main objection being the lack of transparency and of participation of communities and people in the negotiations. Indeed, the people who will be most affected do not have space to participate.

In the end, Marike (Dominican Republic) expressed concern about how farmers and workers can claim their rights. For Marike, this is about justice and about creating pathways for farmers and workers to speak up.

“People that will suffer the impacts (of agreements), they don't have space to participate”.



Modern FTAs allow the setting up of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) to monitor the proper implementations of TSD provisions. However, speakers from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, communicated that the voice of civil society has not been taken into account by governments nor by the EU so far.

What about the DAGs?



Both Jorge (Ecuador) and Ana Romero (Peru) have the perception that the consultations in which they participated had the sole purpose of being a **tick the box exercise**. As such, it seems that the mechanisms laid out in the FTAs for meaningful participation of the civil society are insufficient.

“After 2 years, trade unions decided to quit participation in DAG because of lack of effective and positive impact for Ecuador”.



The role of national policies



Countries should not adopt flexible policy frameworks and labour regulations that could make employment more precarious and are contrary to the FTAs as mentioned by Ana (Peru). Helen (Colombia) mentioned the need for the adoption of national measures to create formal employment and fight precarity for workers working in the informal sector, who face challenges such as lack of access to social security and job instability.

Marika (Dominican Republic) is of the view that just as businesses can be held accountable, **local governments must be considered co-responsible** and be engaged in the dialogue. Local governments can also work with civil society organisations and other stakeholders to develop and implement policies and programs that support fair and sustainable practices in the food supply chain. This can include providing resources and training to enable stakeholders to participate in supply chain monitoring and reporting, supporting local farmers and producers, and promoting fair labour practices and worker protections.

The role of the EU



Generally, the speakers have expressed concerns about the EU not playing the role that it was supposed to play through the FTAs on promoting human rights. Ana (Peru) highlighted how the adoption of some national policies that better protect human and labour rights are only effectively triggered in their countries after the European Union addresses the subject with the Government.

Speakers from Colombia, Peru and Ecuador agreed that if the EU wishes to aid partner countries and be perceived as the global leader in development and green solutions, it must accept and take on more responsibility on this matter.

For Brendah (Uganda) extraterritorial obligations need to be part of trade agreements and Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence regulations. This is essential to provide clarity of the jurisdiction where an issue can be raised against legal authorities and be investigated.

Connectedly, indicates Brendah, the national examples of price regulations²⁶ could be considered in EU Trade agreements, for example capping farm product prices (in terms of a minimum price) or introducing import quotas, which would limit the amount of food products that can be imported from the EU into African countries.

In turn, Luis (Chile) argues that the EU can play a role in ending this logic of trying to find the cheapest good with no strings attached and start to take seriously the environment and the culture of indigenous people. This is a challenge, as Luis acknowledges, but ultimately there is a need for public decisions to be made by everyone and for everyone, not just for and from the economic powers - this should be something to remember in economic agreements.

Conclusions & recommendations

“We are not against trade, but we need to rethink trade”

As shared by the speakers, trade can be very disruptive if not done appropriately. To tackle these issues, the representatives from the Global South all shared a similar idea of how the trade agreement puzzle should be put together:



The relationship between trade agreements, environmental degradation is direct and evident. These agreements have a negative environmental impact.

We need a real inclusive approach as well. We need integral changes, no minor short-term ones.



Carolina de Moura

Human Rights and Environmental Defender,
Brazil



Ana Romero Cano

Member of Peru's Domestic Advisory Group

Tenemos que pensar en acuerdos comerciales que miren a las personas, que tengan una visión de derechos humanos. Comercio con justicia. Un comercio que respete la diversidad de género, con negociaciones transparentes.

Trade policies are increasing inequalities and poverty in the Global South, it is important for the EU to take into account externalities and spill over effects of EU policies and consumption patterns.



Mike Anane

Journalist focusing on electronic waste,
Ghana

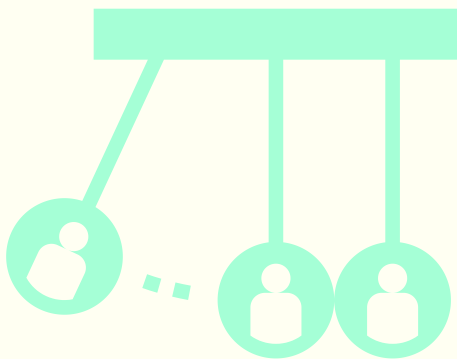
**As expressed by
Brendah (Uganda):
“Those that suffer from
the problem are more
likely to come up with
realistic solutions”.**

These are the specific recommendations to policy makers, designed by our representatives from the Global South and us, the Young Fair Trade Advocates.



Recommendations

The EU can have an impact:

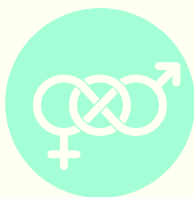


Policymakers at different levels must understand that it is imperative to tackle the root causes of these issues, and must therefore shift the perspective from a solely top-down approach to one based on a real dialogue among politicians, suppliers, buyers, and producers that suffer price fluctuations. This is because people who are directly affected by these trade agreements are more in touch with the reality on the ground and are thus in a better position to provide better and more practical solutions.



Thoroughly assess impacts

- Is the agreement respecting indigenous peoples and their environment?
- Is this kind of trade necessary to sustain life on the planet?
- Is the relationship between the parties based on fairness and equality?
- Are the environmental consequences accounted for and addressed?
- This also entails effective monitoring of compliance of the obligations laid out in the FTAs



Gender as a main course

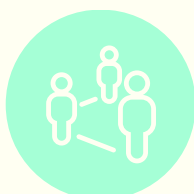
- Women's rights are like a kid's menu: it's part of many restaurant menus but it's not under main courses.
- Mainstream gender in trade agreements and in all EU policies, with meaningful, committal and enforceable commitments.

Recommendations



Ownership to those affected

- Policy makers should start listening to what people on the ground have to say and let them decide what is a priority for them and not propose policies in a top-down approach.
- No more can trade agreements be drafted without workers. They are the ones that know about reality the ground and the countries' challenges.



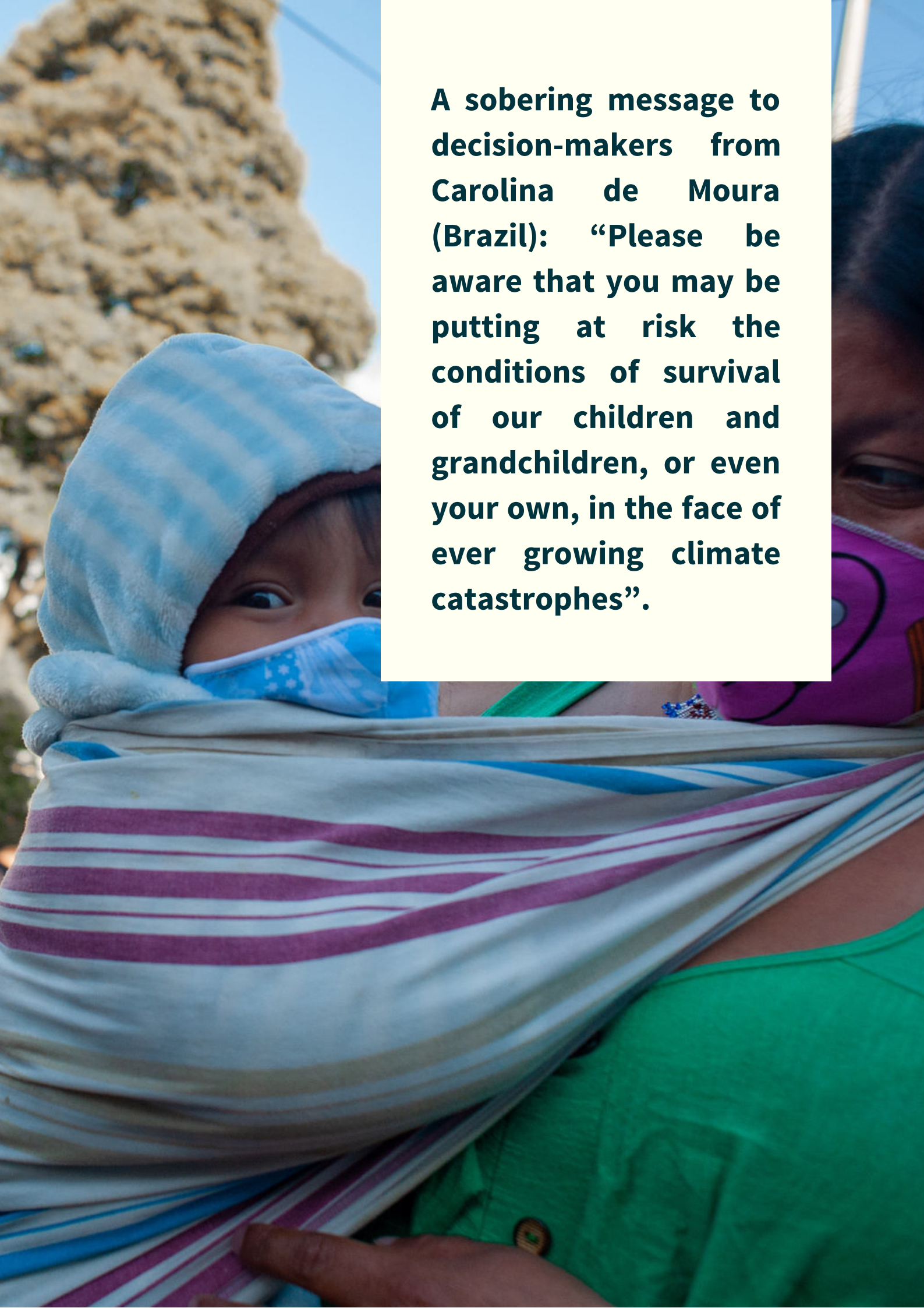
Real involvement of civil society

- Close and permanent dialogue with the civil society from partners countries must be established.
- Set up meetings with national organisations to discuss legislative issues and develop better policies that benefit all partner countries and the people in partner countries.



The Global South is more than a source of raw materials

- Free Trade Agreements are made to maintain a system of exploitation that brings asymmetric consequences to the involved countries, so Europe needs to change its vision that the global south is an endless provider of primary materials to maintain a system of production to meet the insane consumption patterns of the those in wealthy corners of the world such as the Global North.

A photograph of a woman carrying a baby in a sling. The baby is wearing a blue and white striped hood and a blue face mask. The woman is wearing a green shirt and a purple face mask. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a large, textured rock formation.

A sobering message to decision-makers from Carolina de Moura (Brazil): “Please be aware that you may be putting at risk the conditions of survival of our children and grandchildren, or even your own, in the face of ever growing climate catastrophes”.

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Partners in the project



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The idea of the dialogues was to be open to a variety of opinions and ideas about how to improve EU Trade Agreements by trying to integrate perspectives of affected peoples on the ground in the EU's partner countries.

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